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## 20 Exam Tips for Students

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The Muslim student puts his trust in Allaah when facing the tests of this world, and he seeks His help whilst following the prescribed means, in accordance with the words of the Prophet...

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Praise be to Allaah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger and upon his family and companions.

The Muslim student puts his trust in Allaah when facing the tests of this world, and he seeks His help whilst following the prescribed means, in accordance with the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "The strong believer is better and is more beloved to Allaah than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive to attain that which will benefit you and seek the help of Allaah, and do not feel helpless." [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth no. 2664]

«المؤمن القوي خير وأحب إلى الله من المؤمن الضعيف . وفي كل خير . احرص على ما ينفعك واستعن بالله . ولا تعجز» رواه مسلم

Among those means are the following:

- Turning to Allaah by making du'aa' in any way that is prescribed in Islam, such as saying, "Rabbiy ishrah li sadri wa yassir li amri (O my Lord, expand my chest and make things easy for me)."
- Getting used to sleeping early and going to exams on time.
- Preparing all required or permitted equipment such as pens, rulers and setsquares, calculators and watches, because being well prepared helps one to answer questions.
- Reciting the du'aa' for leaving the house: "Bismillaah, tawakkaltu 'ala Allaah, wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah. Allaahumma inni a'oodhu bika an



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adilla aw udalla, aw azilla aw uzalla, aw azlima aw uzlama, aw ajhala aw yujhala `alayya (In the name of Allaah, I put my trust in Allaah, and there is no strength and no power except with Allaah. O Allaah, I seek refuge with You lest I should stray or be led astray, lest I slip (commit a sin unintentionally) or be tripped, lest I oppress or be oppressed, lest I behave foolishly or be treated foolishly)." Do not forget to seek your parents' approval, for their du'aa' for you will be answered.

- Mention the name of Allaah before you start, for mentioning the name of Allaah is prescribed when beginning any permissible action; this brings blessing, and seeking the help of Allaah is one of the means of strength.
- Fear Allaah with regard to your classmates, and do not be affected by their anxiety or fear just before the exam, for anxiety is a contagious disease. Instead, make them feel optimistic by saying good words as prescribed in Islam. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was optimistic when he heard the name of Suhayl (which means "easy") and he said: "Things have been made easy for you." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

« لقد سهل لكم من أمركم » رواه البخاري

He used to like to hear the words 'Yaa Raashid', when he went out for any purpose. So be optimistic that you and your brothers will pass this exam.

- Remembering Allaah (dhikr) dispels anxiety and tension. If something is too difficult for you, then pray to Allaah to make it easy for you. Whenever **Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allaah have mercy on him) found something too difficult to understand, he would say, "O You Who taught Ibraaheem, teach me; O You Who caused Sulaymaan to understand, cause me to understand."
- Choose a good place to sit during the exam, if you can. Keep your back straight, and sit on the chair in a healthy manner.
- Look over the exam first. Studies advise spending 10% of the exam time in reading the questions carefully, noting the important words and dividing one's time between the questions.
- Plan to answer the easy questions first, then the difficult ones. Whilst reading the questions, write notes and ideas which you can use in your answers later.
- Answer questions according to importance.
- Start by answering the easy questions which you know. Then move on to the questions which carry high marks, and leave till the end the questions to which you do not know the answers, or which you think will take a long time to produce an answer or which do not carry such high marks.
- Take your time to answer, for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Deliberation is from Allaah and haste is from the Shaytaan." [A Hasan hadeeth. Saheeh al-Jaami, 3011].

«التأني من الله والعجلة من الشيطان» حسنه الألباني، صحيح الجامع

- Think carefully about the answer and choose the right answer when answering multiple-choice questions. Deal with them in the following manner. If you are sure that you have chosen the right answer, then beware of waswasah (insinuating whispers from the Shaytaan). If you are not sure, then start by eliminating the wrong or unlikely answers, then choose the correct answer based on what you think is most likely to be correct. If you guessed at a correct answer then do not change it unless you are sure that it is wrong – especially if you will lose marks for a wrong answer. Research indicates that the correct answer is usually that which the student thinks of first.
- In written exams, collect your thoughts before you start to answer. Write an outline for your answer with some words which will indicate the ideas which you want to discuss. Then number the ideas in the sequence in which you want to present them.
- Write the main points of your answer at the beginning of the line, because this is what the examiner is looking for, and he may not see what he is looking for if it is in the middle of the page and he is in a hurry.
- Devote 10% of the time for reviewing your answers. Take your time in reviewing, especially in mathematical problems and writing numbers. Resist the desire to hand in the exam papers quickly, and do not let the fact that some people are leaving early bother you. They may be among the people who have handed in their papers too early.
- If you discover after the exam that you answered some questions incorrectly, then take that as a lesson in the importance of being well prepared in the future, and not rushing to answer questions. Accept the will and decree of Allaah and do not fall prey to frustration and despair. Remember the hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), "If anything befalls you, do not say, 'If only I had done such and such.' Rather say, 'Qadar Allaah wa maa sha'a kaan (the decree of Allaah and what He wills happened),' for saying 'if only' opens the door for the Shaytaan." [Saheeh Muslim, and the first part of this hadeeth was mentioned above, Reported by Muslim].

«إن أصابك شيء فلا تقل: لو أني فعلت كان كذا وكذا. ولكن قل: قدر الله، وما شاء فعل. فإن لو تفتح عمل الشيطان» رواه مسلم

- Note that cheating is haraam whether it is in foreign language tests or any other tests. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Whoever cheats is not one of us." [Reported by Muslim]

«من غشنا فليس منا» رواه مسلم

- It is wrongdoing and it is a haraam means of attaining a degree or certificate, etc., that you have no right to. The consensus is that cheating is a kind of cooperation in sin and transgression. So do without that which is haraam and Allaah will suffice you from His bounty. Reject all offers of haraam things that come to you from others. Whoever gives up a thing for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will compensate him with something better. You have to denounce and resist evil, and tell the authorities about any such thing that you see during the exam, or before or after it. This is not the forbidden kind of slander rather it is denouncing evil which is obligatory.

- Advise those who buy or sell questions or post them on the Internet etc., or who prepare cheat notes. Tell them to fear Allaah, and tell them of the ruling on what they are doing and on the money they earn from that. Tell them that the time they are spending in preparing these haraam things, if they spent it in studying, or answering previous exams, or helping one another to understand the subject before the exam, that would be better for them than doing these haraam things.
- Remember what you have prepared for the Hereafter, and the questions of the examination in the grave, and how to be saved on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is saved from the Fire and admitted to Paradise will indeed have succeeded.

We ask Allaah to make us succeed in this world and cause us to be among those who are victorious and saved in the Hereafter, for He is the All-Hearing Who answers prayer.

Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

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